Range Use Plan Primer

Range Use Plan Training Program

Version 2.0
October 2000

BRITISH COLUMBIA

Ministry of Forests
Forest Practices Branch

Range Use Plan Primer

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Ministry of Forests

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106-06352/

Citation:
B.C. Ministry of Forests Forest Practices Branch. 2000. Range use plan primer: range use plan training program. vers. 2.0, For. Pr. Br., Min. For., Victoria, B.C.

html URL: http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/hfp/range/rup2000/httoc.htm
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FPC vs. the Code!

Throughout this training program, the following terms related to the Forest Practices Code are used interchangeably:

Forest Practices Code

- Forest Practices Code
- FPC
- Code

The Forest Practices Code of British Columbia Act

- *Forest Practices Code of British Columbia Act*
- *FPC of B.C. Act*
- the Act

Regulations

- Regulations
- FPC Regulations
- FPC Reg.

Guidebooks

- Guidebooks
- FPC Guidebooks

Welcome

Range Use Plan Training Program Overview

Welcome to the Range Use Plan Training Program. This course is designed to assist you to effectively develop range use plans that meet the requirements outlined in the Forest Practices Code. This self-study *Primer* forms the first module of this four-module training program. We hope you find the program informative, interesting and useful.

Purpose of the Training Program

The Range Use Plan Training Program is designed to:

- explain the requirements in the Forest Practices Code (FPC) for range use plans;
- identify sources of information for developing range use plans;
- build skills in gathering and analyzing field information;
- build skills in developing a range use plan (new and replacement) that meets the requirements outlined in the FPC;
- build skills in reviewing (referrals of) range use plans; and
- explain how range use plans are amended.

Components of the Training Program

The Range Use Plan Training Program consists of a self-study component and three classroom/field sessions.

The self-study component consists of this *Range Use Plan Primer*. The *Primer* will introduce you to the materials that will be covered in more detail in the classroom and field sessions. It will also serve as reference material for when you are developing your own plans after the classroom/field sessions are complete.

The classroom/field sessions will build on the information presented in the *Primer*. They will provide an opportunity to ask questions, clarify your understanding of the material and practice your skills in developing a range use plan. The classroom/field sessions consist of the following:

- **Starting the Range Use Plan** (Classroom Session);
- **Collecting Range Use Plan Data** (Field Session); and
- **Completing the Range Use Plan** (Classroom Session).

How should I take this training?

Experienced Range Use Planners

If you have significant experience in developing range use plans, you should review this *Primer* to familiarize yourself with the requirements for range use plans under the Forest Practices Code. You may not need to attend the subsequent classroom and field training sessions in this training program.

New Range Use Planners

If you have little or no experience in developing a range use plan, you should read this *Primer* and then participate in all three classroom and field training sessions:

- the *Primer* will provide you with the prerequisite knowledge to enable you to obtain maximum benefit from the classroom and field sessions; and
- the classroom and field sessions will provide you with the knowledge, skills and practice to develop a range use plan.

What's special about this training program?

This training program will provide you with:

- an understanding of range use plan requirements under the Forest Practices Code; and
- opportunities to build and practice skills in developing a range use plan that meets the requirements of the Forest Practices Code.

To assist you in achieving the objectives of this training program, we have designed a program that:

- **minimizes your training time**—we have combined self-study and classroom/field training into an integrated program that minimizes your time away from the office/field yet provides you with the knowledge and skills to develop a range use plan;
- **relates to the planning activity**—we have organized the training and presented the information in a manner that relates directly to the activities you will be performing in developing a plan;
- **is self-paced**—you control your pace through the *Primer* (self-study). You can repeat sections to refresh your understanding of the material. Units contain activities to enable you to assess your comprehension of the material. The classroom/field sessions will provide opportunities for you to ask questions of the experts and apply your knowledge on real-life case studies; and
- **is a reference tool**—the training materials are designed for use after the program is complete (i.e., as you develop your own plans).

What is the Range Use Plan Primer?

Description

The *Range Use Plan Primer* is a self-study booklet that provides an overview of developing a range use plan. The *Primer* is intended to explain the basics of range use plans so that you will be able to compile a simple plan without attending the classroom or field components.

The *Range Use Plan Primer*:

- describes the relationship between range use plans and the various range agreements;
- provides an overview of the requirements in the FPC for range use plans;
- assists you to understand the contents of a range use plan through examples, exercises and a progressive case study that involves compiling a range use plan; and
- explains the administrative process for range use plans including reviews, referrals, approvals, amendments, and monitoring.

How long will it take?

Reading the *Primer*—including completing the activities and case study—will take approximately 4 to 8 hours.

This *Primer* should be completed prior to attending the class/field sessions. This will:

- enable you to obtain maximum benefit from the discussions in the classroom and field; and
- provide you with the background knowledge to participate in the class/field case study. The class/field case study builds on the progressive case study in Unit 4 of this Primer and involves collecting field data and developing a range use plan that meets your local conditions.

What do I need as I read this Primer*?*

As your read this *Primer*, you will need:

- a copy of the *Range Act* and amendments;
- a copy of the *Forest Practices Code of British Columbia Act* and amendments;
- a copy of the relevant regulations:
  - Operational Planning Regulation,
  - Range Practices Regulation,
  - Provincial Forest Use Regulation, and
  - Security for Forest Practice Liabilities Regulation;
- a copy of the relevant guidebooks:
  - Range Use Plan Guidebook,

- Biodiversity Guidebook,
- Riparian Management Area Guidebook,
- Managing Identified Wildlife Guidebook, and
- Community Watershed Guidebook.

Enjoy the training program!!!

For your information

The materials in this program are designed for training purposes and to provide you with reference material for your day-to-day activities.

Please note that these materials are not intended to serve as legal advice or opinion. Please consult the acts, relevant regulations and guidebooks for more complete information.

Unit 1: What is a Range Use Plan?

Objectives

At the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- explain what a range use plan is, when it is required and the different types of range use plans; and
- explain how range use plans link to other range agreements.

Unit Summary

This unit contains:

- a definition of range use plans;
- a description of the range agreements requiring range use plans; and
- a summary of range agreement requirements.

What are range use plans?

Definition of range use plans

Range use plans are required under the *Forest Practices Code of British Columbia Act* for the range agreements issued under the *Range Act*.

Range use plans provide:

- a description of the grazing activities, hay-cutting activities, range developments, and range practices for the plan area; and
- a formal opportunity for the public and government agencies to review and comment on the planned management activities for Crown range.

Range use plans last for up to 10 years or until the range agreement it relates to expires—whichever is shorter.

Why are range use plans required?

The objective of a range use plan is to ensure that range agreement holders plan in advance of activities and consider the needs of other resource values and users.

Range use plans expand on what was formerly required by the *Range Act* through Tenure Management Plans (TMPs). The obligations of range agreement holders are now similar to those of holders of other agreements such as timber agreements.

When must range use plans be developed?

Range use plans that replace Tenure Management Plans (originally required for range licence holders) are now required for all range agreements.

Range use plans must be prepared for:

- all *Range Act* agreements—grazing permits and licences (including temporary grazing permits) and hay-cutting permits and licences.

However, range use plans are **not** required for:

- Crown grazing leases issued by the Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks (MELP) under the *Land Act*; and
- private grazing lands (except where unfenced private land is grazed in common with Crown rangeland; in this case, the grazing schedule for a range use plan will apply).

How are range use plans changed?

A range use plan can be changed through:

- **a replacement plan**—which is developed and approved in the same manner as the original plan; and
- **amendments to a plan**—discussed below and in Unit 5 of this *Primer*.

Amendments to a plan

Plans can be amended as either voluntary or required amendments:

- **voluntary amendments**—the holder of a range use plan may at any time submit an amendment to the district manager for approval (e.g., water development has been added)—see section 34 of the *Forest Practices Code of British Columbia Act*; and
- **required amendments**—range use plans **must** be amended when it becomes apparent that the objectives in the plan cannot be achieved or if the district manager determines that the range use plan should be amended. In these situations, the holder of the range use plan should submit the amendment to the district manager—see section 35 of the *Forest Practices Code of British Columbia Act* and section 54.1 of the Operational Planning Regulation..

Range agreements and range use plans

What is a range agreement?

A range agreement is an agreement that grants the right to use and improve Crown range for grazing livestock or cutting hay. Agreements are awarded as either a:

- licence;
- permit; or
- grazing lease.

Licence

Licences have a term of 10 years, are replaceable and require the holder to submit a range use plan. The range use plan must be approved by the district manager prior to livestock being turned out onto the range or hay removed for a hay-cutting licence.

Licences include:

- grazing licences; and
- hay-cutting licences.

Permit

Permits have a maximum term of 5 years and may be replaced on the expiry date. However, the range agreement holder has not the same expectation of a replacement agreement as with a licence. The range use plan must be approved by the district manager prior to livestock being turned out onto the range or hay removed for a hay-cutting permit.

Permits include:

- grazing permits;
- temporary grazing permits; and
- hay-cutting permits.

Grazing lease

A grazing lease gives the holder exclusive use of the forage on Crown land for grazing purposes. These leases are issued by the Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks (MELP) under the *Land Act*.

A range use plan is not required for a grazing lease. However, the lease holder must prepare a Grazing Lease Management Plan. The development of a Grazing Lease Management Plan is not covered in this training program.

Summary of range agreement requirements

Agreement	Term	Range Use Plan required?
Grazing Licence	10 years	✓ Yes
Hay-cutting Licence	10 years	✓ Yes
Grazing Permit	not to exceed 5 years	✓ Yes
Temporary Grazing Permit	1 year	✓ Yes
Hay-cutting Permit	1 year	✓ Yes
Temporary Hay-cutting Permit	1 year	✓ Yes
Grazing Lease	21 years with a 10th anniversary renewal clause	✗ No

Difference between plans for grazing and hay-cutting agreements

Range Use Plans for Grazing Agreements require:

- a map;
- a grazing schedule indicating an AUM total, livestock classes and numbers, and periods of use;
- any key areas, and for these areas, readiness criteria, average stubble heights and browse use levels;
- measures to address district manager strategies relating to: ungulate winter range, plant communities, biodiversity, protecting resource features and/or sensitive areas, achieving or maintaining Proper Functioning Condition (PFC) in riparian areas, water quality objectives, trees not free growing, WHAs, other;
- expiry date;
- signature of the plan proponent.[1]

Range Use Plans for Hay-cutting Agreements require:

- a map;
- measures to address strategies to achieve desired plant community;
- average stubble height on area to be harvested;
- date of intended harvest;
- readiness criteria;
- expiry date;
- signature of the plan proponent.[1]

More detailed information on the content requirements of range use plans for these agreements can be found in the Range Use Plan Guidebook.

[1] Unless the district manager prepares the plan under section 27(3) of the *FPC of B.C. Act*.

Unit 2: What Legislation Applies to Range Use Plans?

Objectives

At the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- explain how the *Range Act* and the Forest Practices Code regulate range practices in B.C.;
- find the applicable sections in the *Forest Practices Code of British Columbia Act*, regulations and guidebooks that relate to range use plans; and
- describe the relationship between range use plans and higher-level plans and other operational plans.

Unit Summary

This unit contains:

- an overview of the legislation;
- an overview of the *Range Act;*
- an overview of the Forest Practices Code;
- an overview of the relationship between the *Forest Practices Code of British Columbia Act* and range use plans;
- an overview of the relationship between range use plans and higher-level plans and operational plans;
- an overview of the FPC regulations that apply to range use plans; and
- an overview of the FPC guidebooks that apply to range use plans.

Overview of the legislation

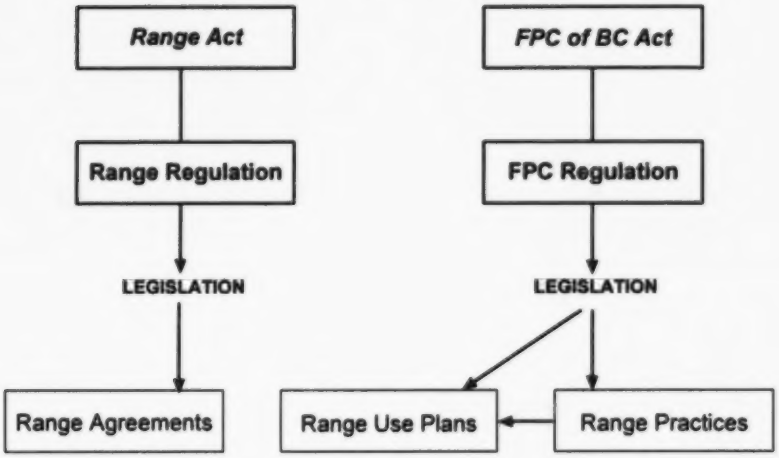
Introduction

Two Acts regulate range practices and agreements in British Columbia:

- the *Range Act*, and Range Regulation; and
- the *Forest Practices Code of British Columbia Act* and regulations.

The *Range Act* grants the right to use Crown range/forage through the form of a range agreement, while the *Forest Practices Code of British Columbia Act* regulates how Crown range will be used (e.g., requirement for a range use plan, acceptable range practices).

Overview of the legislation



Overview of the *Range Act*

What is the purpose of the Range Act?

The *Range Act* primarily addresses the **allocation** of range agreements. The *Range Act* specifies who has the authority to grant licences and permits and spells out the terms and conditions of those agreements. In addition, the *Range Act* provides enforcement tools for the suspension and cancellation of range agreements.

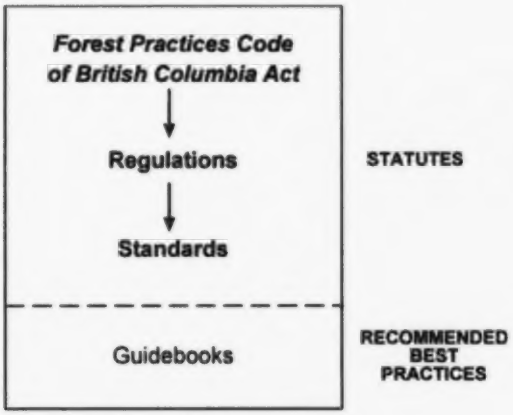
Overview of the Forest Practices Code

Structure of the Forest Practices Code

The Forest Practices Code (FPC or Code) consists of:

- the *Forest Practices Code of British Columbia Act*,
- regulations,
- standards, and
- guidebooks.

Overview of the Forest Practices Code



Vision of the Forest Practices Code

The vision of the FPC is to ensure "sustainable use of the forests we hold in trust for future generations."

This vision is written into the preamble to the *Forest Practices Code of British Columbia Act* and forms the basis for the Code.

Sustainable use includes:

- managing forests to meet present needs without compromising the needs of future generations,
- providing stewardship of forests based on an ethic of respect for the land,
- balancing productive, spiritual, ecological, and recreational values of forests to meet the economic and cultural needs of peoples and communities, including First Nations,
- conserving biological diversity, soil, water, fish, wildlife, scenic diversity, and other forest resources, and
- restoring damaged ecosystems.

The *Forest Practices Code of British Columbia Act* and range use plans

Parts of the Forest Practices Code of British Columbia Act *related to range use plans*

The parts of the *Forest Practices Code of British Columbia Act* that relate to range use plans include:

- Part 1 – Definitions
- Part 3 – Operational planning
- Part 4 – Forest practices (including range)
- Part 5 – Protection of forest resources (including range)
- Part 6 – Compliance and enforcement

Part 3—Operational planning

Part 3 of the *Forest Practices Code of British Columbia Act*:

- requires that a range use plan be prepared;
- sets out the general content requirements for a range use plan;
- specifies exemptions from preparing a range use plan;
- specifies how range use plans are amended and replaced; and
- details the public notice requirements before a range use plan can be approved and specifies the manner in which a plan is evaluated and approved.

Review the applicable sections of Part 3 of the *Forest Practices Code of British Columbia Act* (listed below) that apply to range use plans.

As you review the sections, make notes in the space provided.

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Part 4—Range practices for agreement holders

Part 4 of the *Forest Practices Code of British Columbia Act* describes practices that range agreement holders and the government must follow. Part 4 of the Act:

- requires range agreement holders to carry out the activities described in the plan; and
- outlines requirements for range practices that must be followed. Activities proposed in your range use plan must be consistent with these requirements.

If these requirements in Part 4 are not followed, the government can use the enforcement powers in the Act to ensure compliance (see Part 6 of the Act for more information).

Review the applicable sections of Part 4 of the *Forest Practices Code of British Columbia Act* (listed below) that apply to range use plans.

As you review the sections, make notes in the space provided.

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s. 68: _____

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s. 69: _____

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s. 73: _____

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s. 74: _____

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Part 5—Range practices for all persons

Part 5 of the *Forest Practices Code of British Columbia Act* describes requirements that apply to **everyone,** including range agreement holders, government and the public.

Like Part 4 of the Act, you will need to be aware of these requirements when planning *Range Act* activities for your area. If these requirements are not met, the government can use the enforcement powers in the Act to ensure compliance (see Part 6 of the Act for more information).

Review the applicable sections of Part 5 of the *Forest Practices Code of British Columbia Act* (listed below) that apply to range use plans.

As you review the sections, make notes in the space provided.

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s. 101: _____

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s. 105: _____

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Part 6—Range-related enforcement provisions

Part 6 of the *Forest Practices Code of British Columbia Act* describes the types of penalties, fines, etc., the government can issue if the requirements of the Act (Parts 2–5) are not followed. Failure to follow these requirements may result in the following (depending on the violation):

- suspension and cancellation of the range agreement (under the *Range Act*);
- a violation ticket or warning ticket (under the *Offence Act*);
- a monetary penalty or fine (sections 117 and 143);
- forfeiture/seizure of livestock (section 116);
- an order to stop the activity that is not consistent with the requirements (section 123); and
- an order to remedy (repair) any damage caused (section 149).

Review the applicable sections of Part 6 of the *Forest Practices Code of British Columbia Act* (listed below) that apply to range use plans.

As you review the sections, make notes in the space provided.

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s. 118: _____

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s. 123: _____

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s. 131: _____

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s. 143: _____

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s. 150: _____

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s. 152: _____

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s. 154: _____

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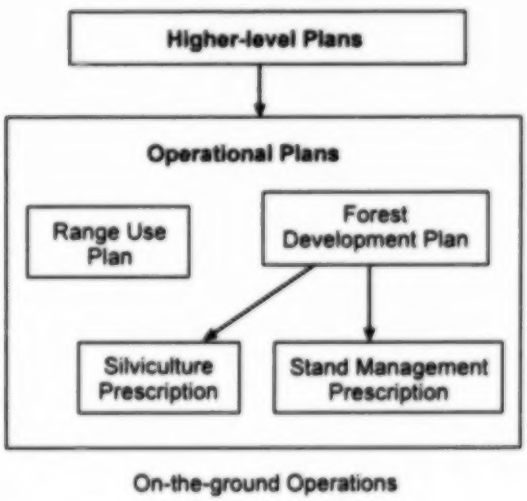
FPC planning framework

What is the FPC planning framework?

The *Forest Practices Code of British Columbia Act* establishes an FPC planning framework made up of:

- **higher-level plans**—containing objectives (e.g., requirements) that must be considered when developing a range use plan; and
- **operational plans including range use plans**—range use plans are one of seven operational plans defined in the Forest Practices Code. Range use plans define range practices (activities) that will be carried out over the life of the plan.

FPC Planning Framework



The Forest Practices Code Planning Hierarchy

The *Guide to Writing Resource Objectives and Strategies* describes the Code planning hierarchy as follows:

Goals describe a future vision and are worded to establish broad aims without a specific time-frame. They normally apply to a large planning area such as a Timber Supply Area (TSA) or Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP).

Objectives outline end results that will achieve broader goals. They describe desired future conditions, are measurable, time-specific, and geographically specific.

Strategies describe how to achieve an objective, and pertain to an activity and how that activity is to be conducted. They can apply to an entire district, to a range unit, to a specific agreement area, or to a portion of an agreement area.

Measures or **practices** are the things the agreement holder does on the ground to achieve the specified strategies. These include livestock management practices such as salting, herding of livestock, construction of developments, prescribed burning, etc.

Higher-level plans

For the purpose of range use plans, a higher-level plan can be:

- an objective for a resource management zone;
- an objective for a landscape unit;
- an objective for a sensitive area; or
- an objective for a recreation site, recreation trail or interpretive forest site.

Relationship of range use plans to higher-level plans

Part 3 of the *Forest Practices Code of British Columbia Act* requires that a range use plan address any issues identified in a higher-level plan and be consistent with any objectives defined in higher-level plans.

Higher-level plans may contain the following types of information that must be addressed and incorporated into your range use plan:

- objectives for landscape-level biodiversity; and
- objectives for wildlife habitat areas.

Operational planning strategies under the Code

There are four (4) operational plans in the Code of which the range use plan is one. The four operational plans are:

- Forest Development Plan
- Silviculture Prescription
- Stand Management Prescription
- Range Use Plan

Relationship of the range use plan to operational plans

Range use plans need to consider and respect other operational plans that overlap with the area under your plan. Contact your local range personnel for more information on the other operational plans that may need to be considered when developing your range use plan.

Range use plans were restructured significantly in 2000. Previously, plans included a mix of **goals, objectives**, **strategies,** and **measures**. Goals, objectives and strategies no longer form a part of the plan. They are provided to the rancher by the district manager as direction on how range is to be managed. Measures along with a grazing schedule now form the plan.

FPC regulations that apply to range use plans

Regulations

More detailed requirements for range use plans and range activities are contained in the following four FPC regulations:

1. Operational Planning Regulation
2. Range Practices Regulation
3. Provincial Forest Use Regulation
4. Security for Forest Practice Liabilities Regulation

Operational Planning Regulation–when to use

When should the Operational Planning Regulation be used?

This regulation should be consulted when performing the following activities:

- preparing a range use plan;
- reviewing a range use plan;
- recommending approval of a range use plan; and
- amending a range use plan.

Operational Planning Regulation–what's in the regulation?

The Operational Planning Regulation contains the following information applicable to range use plans:

- definitions (part 1);
- administration of the plan (part 2); and
- content requirements (part 7).

Definitions (Part 1)
Part 1 of the Operational Planning Regulation contains key definitions used in the regulation including "known resource features" (section 1).

Part 2 also contains terms for the plan such as the requirement to use the best information available when developing the plan and to address any site-specific issues (section 5).

Part 2 also defines the referral process.

Range use plans (Part 7)
Division 1 contains definitions specific to range.

Division 2 contains information supplied by the district manager to the agreement holder.

Division 2.1 deals with range use plan content for grazing and hay-cutting agreements.

Division 2.2 deals with range use plan amendments.

Division 3 deals with notice, review and comment for range use plans and plan amendments.

Part 9 deals with community watersheds.

Part 10 deals with ungulate winter range and identified wildlife.

Review the applicable sections of the Operational Planning Regulation (listed below) that apply to range use plans.

As you review the sections, make notes in the space provided.

s. 1: Definitions _____

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s. 5: _____

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s. 6: _____

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s. 11: _____

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s. 15: _____

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s. 52: Definitions _____

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Range Practices Regulation–when to use?

When should the Range Practices Regulation be used?
This regulation should be consulted when performing the following activities:

- planning field activities;
- conducting activities defined in the range use plan; and
- authorizing range developments.

Range Practices Regulation–what's in the regulation?

This regulation describes requirements related to:

- **range developments**—factors to consider when designing range improvements;
- **range practices**—factors to consider when designing strategies, actions and measures to achieve objectives; and
- **enforcement of range provisions**—penalties that may be imposed if the requirements are not followed.

Review the applicable sections of the Range Practices Regulation (listed below) that apply to range use plans.

As you review the sections, make notes in the space provided.

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s. 2.1: _____

s. 3: _____

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Provincial forest use regulation and range use plans

Requirements for special use permits for use of provincial forests are described in this regulation (Part 3—sections 8–13).

Security for forest practice liabilities regulation and range use plans

This regulation covers the requirements for range agreement holders to provide security (e.g., money) to ensure that they carry out the development, maintenance and other obligations proposed under a range use plan.

Applicable sections of the regulation include:

- section 2—security for range development, maintenance and other obligations liabilities;
- section 3—return of security; and
- section 4—offence.

FPC guidebooks that apply to range use plans

Applicable guidebooks

Guidebooks are an important tool to assist you in developing your range use plan. They may contain recommended procedures, processes and results for range activities.

Guidebooks applicable to range use plan are not part of the legal requirements of the Forest Practices Code and therefore do not have to be followed.

Guidebooks applicable for range use plans include:

- *Range Use Plan*
- *Biodiversity*
- *Community Watershed*
- *Managing Identified Wildlife*
- *Riparian Management Area*

The *Public Consultation Guidebook* may also be useful during the review and comment process.

When to use the guidebooks

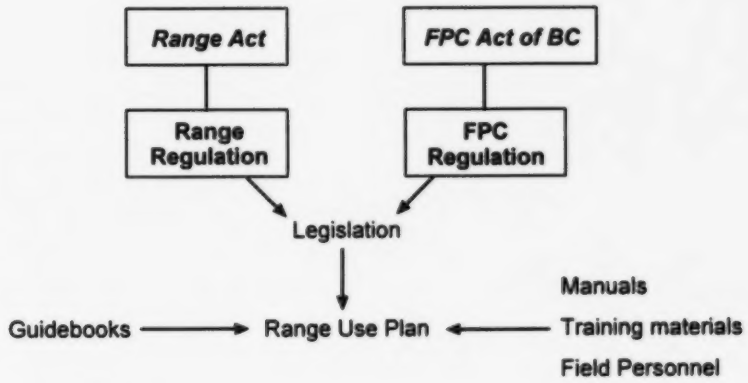
The guidebooks are used to assist in preparing the range use plan and conducting field work. These activities and when to use the guidebooks are explained in more detail in **Unit 4: What is in a Range Use Plan?**

Other sources of information

More information on the Forest Practices Code can be obtained from:

- the FPC co-ordinator in your Ministry of Forests region/district;
- Public Affairs Branch, Ministry of Forests; and
- Compliance and Enforcement Branch, Ministry of Forests.

Summary



Legislation

- *Range Act*
- Range Regulation
- *Forest Practices Code of British Columbia Act*
- Operational Planning Regulation
- Range Practices Regulation
- Provincial Forest Use Regulation
- Security for Forest Practice Liabilities Regulation

Guidebooks

- *Range Use Plan*
- *Community Watershed*
- *Identified Wildlife Management Strategy*
- *Riparian Management Area*

Other publications

- *Range Management and the Forest Practices Code*
- *The Range Resources Assessment Procedures*

Unit 3: Steps to Range Use Plan Development

Overview of developing a range use plan

Major activities

1. Collect background information
2. Conduct a field inspection
3. Determine priorities and investigate strategies
4. Plan preparation
5. Plan approval

Collect background information

District manager activities

Ministry of Forests staff on behalf of the district manager:

1. Collect background information by gathering information related to the range agreement area from:
   - higher-level plans;
   - maps of the area;
   - aerial photographs of the area;
   - licences for the area (e.g., water licences);
   - previous range plans;
   - range agreement (e.g., administrative boundaries); and
   - past inspection reports and function checklists.

2. Gather higher-level plans for the area under agreement.

Time-frame

These activities should be completed to enable fieldwork (inspections) to be conducted during the "snow-free" period when plants are easier to identify.

Responsibility

Ministry of Forests staff.

Conduct a field inspection

Activities

1. Conduct a field inspection to:
   - verify locations of development;
   - identify any problem areas;
   - designate key areas for monitoring purpose;
   - determine current plant communities; and
   - evaluate functionality of riparian areas.

2. Think about strategies, to achieve the objectives for:
   - ungulate winter range;
   - plant communities;
   - wildlife habitat areas;
   - plantations and other sites where young trees are not as high as competing vegetation (i.e., free-growing);
   - areas requiring soil conservation and/or having potential to affect water quality in a community watershed; and
   - riparian areas.

Time-frame

Field visits should be conducted during the "snow-free" period (e.g. late spring, summer and early fall).

Responsibility

Ministry of Forests staff.

Determine priorities and develop strategies

1. Analyze data and develop strategies
   - analyze any data and inspection forms;
   - delineate key areas;
   - determine readiness criteria;
   - determine stubble height for key areas;
   - determine DPCs for areas negatively affected by livestock;
   - develop strategies to achieve objectives for:
     – ungulate winter range
     – DPC
     – PFC in riparian areas
     – WHAs
     – other resource concerns.

2. Deliver objectives, strategies and map to plan proponent.

Plan preparation

1. Plan proponent develops range use plan consisting of:
   - a map;
   - a grazing schedule; and
   - a description of the measures that will be taken to address the district manager strategies.

2. Draft plan is submitted for review and comment and referral.

3. Plan is revised.

4. Plan is submitted for district manager approval.

Responsibility

Plan propononent.

Time-frame

Any time.

Plan approval

1. The district manager approves the plan if satisfied that it adequately manages the forest and range resources for the area.

Responsibility

Ministry of Forests.

Time-frame

Any time prior to livestock turn-out.

Unit 4: The Range Use Planning Process

The components of a range use plan

Range use plans were restructured significantly in 2000. Previously, plans had a mix of higher-level objectives, strategies and measures. Objectives and strategies no longer form a part of the plan. They are provided to the rancher by the district manager as direction on how range is to be managed.

Objectives outline end results and state desired future conditions. Strategies describe how objectives are to be achieved and may have a time-frame. Measures are the actions to be taken by the rancher and are specific, measurable and enforceable.

Part 1

District manager responsibilities

The district manager will provide objectives and strategies for the area under the plan. They will identify any areas of special concern and will provide the locations of key areas (monitoring sites) and range readiness and utilization criteria for those key areas. The district manager will also identify the current and desired plant communities for areas under the plan that have been or might be negatively affected by livestock use and will provide a map of the area under agreement.

Strategies can be prepared on a plan-area-by-plan-area basis, but it is more efficient to develop strategies for larger areas such as range units, landscape units or large homogeneous portions of a district. In some cases it might be feasible for a district manager to produce a list of approved strategies for issues or objectives that are important across the district as a whole. These strategies, along with areas of concern, plant community descriptions, key areas, utilization levels, and readiness criteria would be provided to each rancher well in advance of the time their new range use plan needs to be submitted for approval.

Table 1 gives an example of how goals, objectives, strategie. and measures fit together in a range use plan.

The district manager will ensure that the range use plan submitted by the agreement holder adequately manages the range resource, and that referral and review comments have been addressed where appropriate before giving approval.

Rancher's responsibilities

The rancher must consider the district manager–supplied strategies and higher-level plan objectives when determining the grazing schedule and any measures or actions they will take to manage livestock on the rangeland.

The range use plan for grazing agreements must consist of:

- a map that includes the location of *Range Act* agreement boundaries, range developments (such as fences), significant resource features, and wildlife habitat areas
- the location of any key areas
- a grazing schedule that includes, for each area of use, the AUM total, livestock classes and numbers, and period of use
- measures to address any district manager strategies (including ungulate winter range, plant communities, properly functioning condition, biological diversity, identified wildlife, and new plantations)
- stubble heights and browse use levels for any key areas
- range readiness criteria for any key areas
- an expiry date
- the signature of the *Range Act* agreement holder unless exempted by the district manager

The range use plan for hay-cutting agreements must consist of:

- a map that includes the location of *Range Act* agreement boundaries, significant features, and intended harvest area
- measures to address district manager strategies to achieve or maintain desired plant communities for the area to be harvested
- an average stubble height for the area to be harvested
- a date for the intended time of harvest
- if supplied by the district manager, readiness criteria and other factors that determine timing of harvest
- an expiry date
- the signature of the *Range Act* agreement holder unless exempted by the district manager

Table 1. How goals, objectives, strategies, and measures may be applied in a range use plan

Goal	Objective	Strategy	Measure
• A viable wild ungulate population within the unit	• Maintain the functional integrity of ungulate winter range • Maintain adequate browse and low hiding cover • Maintain an adequate fall standing crop of forage	• Use livestock to pre-condition forage on open grassland units • Plan grazing so the open grasslands have a fall standing crop of rough fescue in excess of ___ cm	• Graze ___ cow/calf pairs for ___weeks (__ AUMs) • Livestock use will occur prior to _____ in order to allow forage plants to regrow • Distribute livestock use uniformly by active herding
• A healthy, natural ecosystem	• Maintain a natural level of biological diversity • Maintain a perennial bunchgrass community in open range areas • Maintain natural stand structure, and prevent unnatural cover breaks	• Manage timing, level and distribution of livestock use • Through a combination of grazing, chemical and biological control methods, limit the spread of noxious weeds	• Follow the stated range readiness criteria in determining when spring livestock grazing is to occur on grasslands. • Livestock grazing will not occur after _____ • Allow understorey plants to regrow prior to fall • Follow the grazing schedule and use level • Disturbed areas will be revegetated within __ years

Goal	Objective	Strategy	Measure
• A healthy, natural ecosystem	• Maintain and protect resource features/sensitive areas	• Restore any damaged resource features within ___ years through livestock management and range developments	• Follow the grazing schedule and use level • Range developments

• A healthy functioning watershed with intact riparian plant communities	• Maintain or achieve properly functioning condition in riparian areas	• Manage livestock use and plan range developments:
		  • so that damaged stream and riparian sections are restored to properly functioning condition (PFC) within ___ years
		  • to restore a dense corridor of willow through natural recruitment along ____ Creek within ___ years
		  • to maintain stable soils and streambanks
		  • to prevent an accumulation of faecal material within the riparian area
		• Reduce livestock watering from creek
			• Livestock use will occur when soils are dried to the point where they are not susceptible trampling and compaction
			• Livestock use will occur prior to _____ in order to prevent browsing of willow shoots
			• Remove livestock from the riparian portion of the unit when the average stubble height in the key area reaches ____ cm
			• Distribute livestock by daily herding and by placement of salt blocks. Salt blocks will be placed no closer than ___ m to the riparian area
			• Develop ___ off-stream water sites at _____

• A healthy natural ecosystem	• Achieve desired plant communities (DPCs) of conifer forest with an understorey of ____, and ___open grasslands of rough fescue	• Manage livestock use to:
		  • maintain a vigorous understorey of _____
		  • maintain a vigorous native perennial plant community in _____
		  • Maintain the current plant community through appropriate timing and degree of use
		• Achieve DPC within ___ years
			• Graze from ___ to ___
			• Manage to achieve a __% level of use of current year's growth on average.
			• Manage for an average stubble height of ___ cm in key areas
			• Will not exceed __ % use of current year's browse in ___ key areas

Goal	Objective	Strategy	Measure

• Clean drinking water	• Meet or exceed the Canadian Drinking Water Standards within ___ years	• Manage livestock use:
		  • so that sedimentation and faecal contamination are reduced.
		  • to prevent an accumulation of faecal material within the riparian zone within 1 km of the community water supply intake
		  • to limit foraging and loafing within the riparian area
		  • to achieve a vigorous riparian plant community at a DPC of _____
		  • to maintain or achieve PFC within __ years
			• Follow a grazing schedule (season and duration of use)
			• Follow stated readiness criteria (soils and plant phenology)
			• Follow an appropriate level of use (livestock class, numbers, and AUMs)
			• Follow stated use levels (stubble height)
			• Distribute livestock use through management (salting, herding, developments)

• A viable forest industry	• Achieve free growing conditions on newly planted cutblocks	• Manage livestock use so that they will not damage tree seedlings to the extent that the plantation fails to meet free to grow conditions • Manage livestock to limit trampling and browsing of conifer seedlings	• Will not salt within ___ m of plantations • Remove livestock from the unit when a stubble height of ___ is reached or prior to _____
• Prevention of wildlife extirpation	• Protect known habitats and populations of _____	• Defer spring grazing by livestock in identified waterfowl nesting areas • Manage livestock to maintain the current plant community of _____ and a spring grass cover of ____ cm on average • Prevent disturbance around the rattle-snake hibernaculum	• Graze livestock in this unit from _____ to ____ • Manage for a stubble height of ____ in key area _____ • Build a fence to prevent livestock access in the immediate vicinity of the hibernaculum

Application of concepts

A number of concepts, both old and new, have been introduced to the range use planning process. Following are definitions of these concepts and their application.

1. Definitions

browse – that part of leaf and twig growth of shrubs, woody vines and trees available for animal consumption

current plant community – the plant community that is present today

desired plant community – a plant community that produces the kind, proportion and amount of vegetation necessary for meeting plan objectives, given the site's potential and limitations

key area – a portion of a range agreement area selected because of its value as a monitoring site for grazing

properly functioning condition – the ability of a stream, river, wetland, or lake, and its riparian area, to: (a) withstand normal peak flood events without experiencing accelerated soil loss, channel movement or bank movement; (b) filter runoff; and (c) store and safely release water

range readiness criteria – the criteria made known by the district manager that indicate when the range is ready for grazing or harvesting based on a combination of soil moisture conditions and the phenological stage of plants

riparian area – an area of land that (a) is adjacent to a stream, river, lake, or wetland, and (b) contains vegetation that, due to the presence of water, is distinctly different from the vegetation of adjacent upland areas

stubble height – a measurement based on the height of the specified plant species remaining after harvesting, either mechanically or by grazing animals

2. Application

Areas and resource features where there has been or might be significant and negative livestock impacts

The regulation requires that these areas be mapped and that the district manager provide strategies for them. The agreement holder must then develop measures to address these strategies.

The intent is to allow resource agencies and ranchers to focus their efforts on those areas of significant, negative impacts rather than spreading the monitoring and management effort over areas where use is light and insignificant. Previously, the district manager needed to consciously exempt areas where use was insignificant. Now they can ignore areas of non-use and focus on areas of concern.

Plant communities

The district manager must, for areas where they determine that livestock have a significant and negative effect, provide a description of:

- current plant communities (CPC)
- desired plant communities (DPC) ; and
- strategies to achieve or maintain the DPC

Descriptions of areas can often be presented in tabular form, and should be limited to main overstorey and understorey species. Strategies are general in nature and might contain recovery time-frames where the CPC and DPC are not the same.

The desired plant community takes into account multiple values such as: economics/quality of life/social, forage for livestock, fisheries, wildlife, biodiversity, water quality, and recreation. The desired plant community is chosen to optimize for this mix of values, not maximize for any one value, since inevitably some values will be in conflict with others. The DPC will, in most cases, be a seral stage to the PNC.

Properly functioning condition

The objective for riparian areas is to maintain or achieve PFC. The concept of functionality has its origin in hydrology and watershed management. A properly functioning watershed should *capture* precipitation where it falls, *store* it in the soil profile (and move it slowly downslope to the riparian zone), and then slowly and *safely release* it into streams, rivers, wetlands, and lakes. Several parameters are evaluated in field assessments of the stream or wetland feature, the adjacent riparian area and the contributing uplands. These are: stream channel or wetland properties, flow regime, hydrology/soils, erosion/deposition, biotic community, nutrient inputs, and water quality. Areas are rated "PFC," "at risk" or "non-functional" depending on the observations made.

Functionality checklists for uplands, streams and wetlands/lakes can be found in the Range Resources Assessments Procedures. These are completed for relatively homogeneous areas and provide an objective assessment and record of the health of the riparian feature, its adjacent riparian zone, and the contributing uplands. Follow-up monitoring is used to determine if management practices on the land are leading to improvement or decline in functionality.

Where problems occur, the district manager will advise the agreement holder of the area of concern and will provide general strategies and a time-frame for returning the area to PFC. The agreement holder will propose a grazing schedule and livestock management measures that will meet the strategies and the recovery time-frame. The district manager will determine if the schedule and measures are adequate, and if so, will approve them.

Key areas

Key areas are intended to serve as monitoring sites to reflect the acceptability of current grazing management.

Key areas are not mandatory, but when identified, the following will be provided:

(i) range readiness criteria indicating when the range is ready for grazing or harvesting based on a combination of soil moisture conditions and the phenological stage of plants. Leaf development stage of indicator grass species is the most reliable criterion.

(ii) average stubble heights and browse utilization levels. These are based on the height of the most palatable or preferred plant species remaining after harvesting either mechanically or by grazing animals and the % usage of new woody shrub or hardwood tree growth.

Key areas may be selected to determine range readiness in the case of spring turn-out pastures. They may also be selected to monitor use levels (stubble height and browse utilization) that are needed to determine when livestock will be moved to a new unit in order to prevent over-use. This is especially applicable in riparian areas where livestock use is often heavier than in adjacent uplands or on forested cutblocks where proper use levels and distribution are necessary to prevent damage to young conifer seedlings.

Unit 5: How is a Range Use Plan Implemented?

Objectives

At the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- explain the amendments process for range use plans; and
- describe the impact of the Forest Practices Board (FPB) and Forest Appeal Commission (FAC) on range use plans.

Unit Summary

This unit contains:

- a description of amendments to range use plans; and
- a description of administrative bodies under the Code.

Amendments to range use plans

When are amendments required?

Voluntary amendments

The holder of a range use plan may at any time submit an amendment to the district manager for approval (section 34 of the *Forest Practices Code of British Columbia Act*).

Required amendments

An amendment must be prepared and submitted to the district manager if the plan holder knows that the results specified in the plan will not be achieved (section 35 of the *Forest Practices Code of British Columbia Act*).

The district manager may require an amendment (or a new plan) if circumstances are such that the plan will not achieve the desired results (section 35 of the *Forest Practices Code of British Columbia Act*).

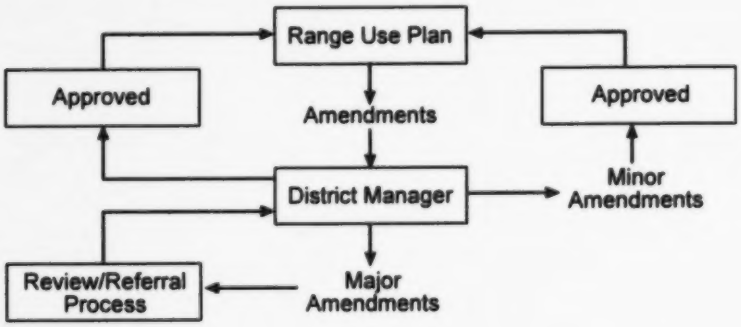
Amendment triggers

- special circumstances (section 35 *Code Act*)
- range use plan is inconsistent (section 54.1) with the OPR because of the:
  - establishment of a higher-level plan
  - designation or amendment to a community watershed
  - establishment of or amendment to water quality objectives
  - designation of an ungulate winter range
  - establishment of or amendment to ungulate winter range objectives

- establishment of a WHA or a general wildlife measure
- establishment of a strategy to meet a new objective

Process for amending a plan

Minor vs. Major Amendments



The process for amending a plan is the same as the process for developing a plan. The effort required to develop and approve an amendment will vary depending on the type of change. For example:

- a **minor amendment** (e.g., turning out or moving into pastures a few days early) may be approved by the district manager without review and comment (if it is determined that the amendment does not affect the public in any material way); or
- **a major amendment**—one that materially affects other users or the way resources are managed, such as a new development or a major change in cattle management,—will require review and comment and possibly referral to other agencies. Comments from both these activities must be addressed before submitting the plan to the district manager for approval.

The district manager will approve an amendment once they are:

- satisfied that the amendment adequately manages and conserves the resources of the area to which it applies; and
- satisfied that the amendment has been prepared and submitted in accordance with the *Forest Practices Code of British Columbia Act* and regulations.

Who amends a plan?

The person who prepared the range use plan is responsible for amending the plan and submitting it to the district manager for approval.

If the district manager prepared the range use plan, the district manager may prepare the amendment.

Sources of information

Forest Practices Code of British Columbia Act sections 34 and 35(3).

Administrative bodies under the Code

Administrative bodies under the FPC

There are three administrative bodies established under the Code:

- **Forest Practices Board (FPB)**—established under Part 8 of the *Forest Practices Code of British Columbia Act*;
- **Forest Appeals Commission (FAC)**—established under Part 9 of the *Forest Practices Code of British Columbia Act*; and
- **Forest Practices Advisory Council (FPAC)**—may be established through a regulation (this council is not discussed in this *Primer*).

Role of the Forest Practices Board (FPB)

The Forest Practices Board (FPB) is an independent agency created to:

- monitor/review forest and range practices—similar to the Office of the Ombudsman;
- handle and investigate complaints from the public; and
- conduct independent audits and special investigations of forest and range practices to determine compliance with designated parts of the Code and appropriateness of enforcement.

Impact of the Forest Practices Board (FPB)

Under the *Forest Practices Code of British Columbia Act,* the FPB has the power to appeal certain decisions made or not made by officials and senior officials under the Code—including the approval of a range use plan. The FPB provides an avenue for the public to follow if they disagree with *Range Act* activities on Crown land.

The FPB can either investigate certain decisions made or not made as a result of a public complaint or an independent audit.

The FPB cannot overturn or change decisions but can conduct investigations and request administrative reviews and appeals of the decisions made.

Personnel involved in developing a plan may be required to provide information to the FPB (as part of an investigation or audit).

Role of the Forest Appeals Commission (FAC)

The Forest Appeals Commission (FAC) is a formal standing body established to hear appeals from parties affected by a decision, or from the Forest Practices Board.

Only an affected party or the Forest Practices Board can appeal decisions made under certain sections of the *Forest Practices Code of British Columbia Act* (sections 127 and 128, respectively).

An affected party or the Forest Practices Board has no right to ask for an appeal until after an administrative review has been conducted (*Forest Practices Code of British Columbia Act*, section 130).

The FAC does not deal with appeals of decisions that are made under the *Forest Act* or *Range Act*. (There is a separate appeal process set up for these appeals.)

Impact of the Forest Appeals Commission (FAC)

Documents, files and plans may be required during an appeal hearing.

Personnel involved in developing a plan may be required to provide information, or appear as witnesses at an appeal hearing.